



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240



April 8, 2005

Honorable Jon Porter
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and
Agency Organization
Committee on Government Reform
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your April 7, 2005, letter concerning a hearing the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce and Agency Organization has scheduled for Wednesday, April 13, 2005. Your letter requests that the Department make available to the Subcommittee for interviews and testimony three employees from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) whom the Subcommittee has identified in connection with the recent allegations of falsified documents relating to the Yucca Mountain project.

The Department of the Interior views these allegations as extremely serious. Immediately upon hearing from the Department of Energy of these allegations, the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey requested the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior to undertake a formal investigation. The Department of the Interior's Inspector General is partnering with the Department of Energy's Inspector General and the Federal Bureau of Investigation on this investigation.

At this time, we do not know nor can we predict what the result of the ongoing investigation will be with respect to the individuals you have invited to the scheduled hearing, or others. Given the potentially serious implications for the employees involved, the Department believes it is inappropriate to require the individuals identified by the Subcommittee to testify in a public hearing about the matters under active investigation. To be clear, the Department is not defending any particular conduct or prejudging the outcome of the investigation; our sole aim is to assure that the investigation proceeds expeditiously and without impediment.

Upon conclusion of the current investigation, the Department will make available to the Subcommittee USGS Director Groat or other USGS officials, as appropriate, to discuss this matter. We also understand that it is within the power and prerogative of the Subcommittee to call these individuals directly to testify.

Honorable Jon Porter

If I can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at 202-208-7693.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Eames", with a checkmark to the left.

Matt Eames
Director, Office of Congressional and
Legislative Affairs

Copy to
The Honorable Danny Davis, Ranking Minority Member